

## **A Big Thank You to the UTA Program**

I went into the UTA program thinking that I was getting involved with an opportunity to work for the math department and do basic tasks under the guidance of a math professor. I was pleasantly surprised that the program was so much more than that. In the first few weeks, I was able to meet with my mentor and learn about how she likes to run her math classes. She kept a flexible plan so that I could also have say in some class activities and lectures. I was able to get a feel for grading homeworks each week and enjoyed seeing how students would challenge themselves and attempt difficult problems. It was very rewarding to be able to refresh my memory on lower level mathematics that I hadn't seen in a long time and also enhance my own understanding by explaining solutions to students. I was particularly lucky in that I was able to take over lecturing one section of the class a couple times. I had no previous experience lecturing for more than ten minutes, but being able to write out the lesson plan and teach for the whole 50 minutes really taught me about pacing, how to effectively answer questions, and the best way to do boardwork. One of the best features of the program was working in the tutoring room each week. I enjoyed the challenge of having to switch from one math class to another on a short notice and watching students work together to solve problems. Even on slow days, the tutoring room was a great experience.

As a whole, the UTA program teaches more than just how to tutor and teach. Our supervisors were prepared to teach us new techniques and introduce us to the steps we need to take in order to excel in mathematics. Each week, when attending the UTA seminar, I was pleased to learn a new tip about how to help other students with their math career, or to be able to help myself achieve greatness in mathematics. The small group size also enhanced the program; I felt like my supervisors were happy to personalize my experience as much as they could. I felt that the other UTAs were also very honest with the group about challenges that they faced while trying to assist students, which made for productive conversations and collective problem-solving. I really enjoy seminars like this one, especially because of the opportunity to present multiple times a semester. The UTA seminar builds confidence in students by improving presentation skills. In general, students can thrive in mathematics, but never learn to effectively present their findings. I enjoyed being able to hone my presentation skills each week and discuss where I needed improvement.

Coming out of the program, I would highly recommend being a UTA to all of my peers who are even slightly involved with mathematics. There are so many classes that require the assistance of UTAs and a variety of interests besides math makes for a much more exciting group of UTAs. I look forward to using the skills I learned this semester as a UTA in all aspects of my professional career. No other program that I have been a part of was as rewarding as being a UTA and having the opportunity to tutor, teach and grow as a mathematician.